

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7324

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1656

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS BF

SUBJ: SPINY LOBSTER

REF: STATE 232168

FOR RIDGWAY FROM AMBASSADOR WEISS

1. YOUR IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION HERE IS STILL CURRENT. I ADD FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS FOR WHAT ASSISTANCE THEY MIGHT BE.

2. ON QUESTION OF LEVEL OF U.S. REPRESENTATION IN NEGOTIATIONS, WHILE RELATIVE LACK OF RANK OF U.S. CHAIRMAN DID NOT HELP MATTERS, IT CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED OF MOST MARGINAL SIGNIFICANCE ON FINAL OUTCOME. AS YOU KNOW, I CARRIED ON DISCUSSIONS PRIOR TO AND, MORE TO THE POINT, DURING DELEGATION'S NEGOTIATIONS DIRECTLY WITH PRIMIN PINDLING. I EXPLICITLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT MY APPROACH WAS AT DIRECTION OF HIGH LEVELS IN WASHINGTON, INCLUDING ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE. THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE TALKS FAILED BECAUSE GCOB BELIEVED MATTER WAS NOT RECEIVING HIGH LEVEL CONSIDERATION.

3. NOR DO I BELIEVE HIGH LEVEL APPROACH, BY SECRETARY OR EVEN PRESIDENT, WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE AT THIS TIME. (IN PART FOR THAT REASON, SEE BELOW FOR OTHER REASONS, NEITHER DO I THINK IT WOULD BE WISE.) GOVERNMENT HERE HAS RECEIVED NOTHING BUT HIGH MARKS FOR ITS HANDLING OF LOBSTER TALKS. EVEN ITS
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MOST SEVERE POLITICAL CRITICS ARE UNSLINTING IN PRAISE FOR THE

EFFORT. AS YOU KNOW, MUCH OF THIS ATTITUDE IS NOT TRACEABLE TO ECONOMIC LOGIC OR FOR THAT MATTER NECESSARILY OTHER LOGIC, BUT RUNS TO CULTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE LOBSTER. THUS FOR GCOB TO REVERSE ITSELF NOW WOULD LEAVE IT OPEN TO SEVERE AND GENERAL PUBLIC CONDEMNATION. IN LIGHT OF FOREGOING A PRESIDENTIAL OR SECRETARIAL APPROACH WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BECOME PUBLIC (EVEN IF USG DID NOT MAKE IT SO), AND TEMPTATION WOULD EXIST TO GAIN EVEN FURTHER CREDIT BY REBUFFING "GIANT", AS USG IS PORTRAYED IN THIS MATTER, BY GCOB "DAVID." THUS APPROACH WOULD PROBABLY FAIL, WOULD DENIGRATE POSITION OF U.S. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST.

4. WERE ALL THIS NOT ENOUGH, EVIDENCE REACHING US SUGGESTS THIS YEAR'S LOBSTER CATCH BY BAHAMIANS IS BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER. LOCAL BELIEF IS THAT IN ABSENCE OF POTS LAID BY U.S. FISHERMEN LARGER AND QUANTITATIVELY MORE LOBSTER ARE COMING CLOSER TO SHORE WHERE THEY CAN BE HARVESTED BY BAHAMIAN FISHING METHODS. (NOTE REPORTS THAT LOBSTER SEEM AS PLENTIFUL IN MIAMI AS THEY EVER HAVE BEEN.) IN SHORT, BUSINESS IS APPARENTLY PRETTY GOOD AND BAHAMIAN CONTENTION (WHICH SEEMS INITIALLY TO HAVE BEEN BORNE OUT) THAT GETTING U.S. FISHERMEN OUT WOULD INCREASE CATCH FOR BAHAMIANS WILL TEND TO REINFORCE EARLIER GCOB RESISTANCE TO AN AGREEMENT WITH U.S.

5. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT GCOB IS RECONSIDERING POSITION. IN FACT, ON CHECKING RUMORS COMING FROM FLORIDA THAT GCOB MIGHT BE CONSIDERING OFFERING LIMITED NUMBERS OF LICENSES, WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN CATEGORICAL ASSURANCES THAT GCOB HAS NO SUCH INTENTION. (AS A MATTER OF INTEREST, CUBAN ATTEMPT TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS IN SEPTEMBER WAS PUT OFF BY GCOB WITH SUGGESTION THAT GCOB COULD NOT BE READY FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS BEFORE DECEMBER. NO FIRM DATE HAS BEEN FIXED FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS. WHEN AND IF IT IS, WE EXPECT CONCENTRATION TO BE ON DELINEATING AREA BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES FOR FIN FISHING WITH RESULT ON LOBSTER TO BE SAME AS U.S. RECENT EXPERIENCE.)

6. RE FACILITIES, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED A RIDICULOUS ASKING PRICE FROM GCOB (NASSAU 1584). WE ARE CLEARLY IN FOR TOUGH BARGAINING ON FACILITIES SINCE U.S. MAXIMUM COUNTER-OFFER BOUND TO FALL FAR SHORT OF GCOB
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EXPECTATIONS. TO OFFER FURTHER CONCESSIONS ON LOBSTER OR EVEN TO BRING TO BEAR HIGH LEVEL INTERVENTION IS LIKELY ADVERSELY TO PREJUDICE OUR NEGOTIATING POSITION ON THE FACILITIES. UNLESS USG HAS REVERSED ITS PRIORITIES WE SHOULD NOT MAKE OUR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FACILITIES MORE DIFFICULT THAN THEY PROMISE TO BE ESPECIALLY SINCE HIGH LEVEL APPROACH ON LOBSTER IS LIKELY TO FAIL.

7. SHORT OF COMING UP WITH A SIZABLE ECONOMIC AID PACKAGE, AND GOD KNOWS HOW LARGE IT WOULD HAVE TO BE, GIVEN GCOB ATTITUDES, THERE IS NOT MUCH CHANCE FOR GAINING REVERSAL IN GCOB POSITION.

8. OBVIOUSLY MY VIEW IS THAT FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, WHOSE CONCERNS ARE CERTAINLY UNDERSTANDABLE, SHOULD BE TOLD THIS IS A CLOSED CHAPTER. IF THEY PERSIST IN REQUESTING A PRESIDENTIAL OR SECRETARIAL COMMUNICATION TO GCOB I WOULD RECOMMEND AGAINST FOR REASONS SET FORTH ABOVE.

9. FYI: AFTER PRECEDING WAS DRAFTED I MET WITH ADDERLEY ON ANOTHER SUBJECT. AT THE END OF OUR MEETING HE REFERRED JOCULARLY TO THE SECRETARY'S COMMENT AT THE SOUTHERN GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE TO THE EFFECT THAT UP TO A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF SPINY LOBSTER. ADDERLEY SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO SEND THE SECRETARY TEN POUNDS TOGETHER WITH RECIPES FOR THEIR PREPARATION. IN ENSURING EXCHANGE ADDERLEY MENTIONED FACT THAT, IN HIS WORDS, "FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION HAD MISS RIDGWAY UP TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION." HE DID NOT DISCLOSE THE SOURCE OF HIS INTELLIGENCE. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WAS A CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN THE CONGRESS RE THE LOBSTER ISSUE AND IN PARTICULAR AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING FURTHER THAT COULD BE DONE TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT. ADDERLEY SAID THAT THERE WAS NOT AND IN HIS VIEW IT WAS A DEAD ISSUE. THIS ONLY CONFIRMS THE ASSESSMENTS OF PRECEDING PARAGRAPHS. END FYI.
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